

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 577

By Cooper B

A RESOLUTION to express support for the establishment of a
Veterans Nursing Home in West Tennessee.

WHEREAS, in public hearings in 1985, the Joint Select Committee on Veterans Affairs learned that long term health care was a priority concern for Tennessee's veterans, and subsequently the Tennessee Department of Veterans Affairs recommended to the General Assembly that a system of State Veterans Homes be established; and

WHEREAS, currently three nursing home facilities for veterans exist; they are located in Knoxville, Murfreesboro, and Humboldt, and two other such facilities are planned for Clarksville and Cleveland; and

WHEREAS, the locations of the existing and planned veteran-specific nursing home facilities make some level of long term care accessible to many veterans across the State, clearly those residing in the southwestern-most counties do not have such access available; and

WHEREAS, the total population of veterans who reside in Tennessee is approximately one half million, which represents approximately 8 percent of the State's total population; and

WHEREAS, the veteran population in and around Shelby County, including Tipton and Fayette counties, is estimated to be 70,000, and of that number, approximately 35 percent are 65 years old or older. Approximately 15 percent of the veteran population there is now 75 years old or older, and approximately 23 percent of the local veteran population will be 75 years old or older in the next five years; and

WHEREAS, data show that approximately 50 percent of those veterans will enter a nursing home sometime during their lifetime, and the average age at which they will enter the nursing home is 82 years old; and

WHEREAS, the demographics of the Shelby, Tipton, and Fayette triad of counties are indicative of present and emerging health care needs of an incredibly important group of men and women who have served their country in war and peace times; and

WHEREAS, most certainly health care is a concern for our aged veterans; however, younger veterans who have experienced wartime service in Iraq and Afghanistan and have extraordinary medical needs are presenting for health care services. Arguably, these needs can best be ministered to in veteran-specific care settings by medical and rehabilitation specialists who are well trained in and knowledgeable about the uniqueness of morbidity related to military service; and

WHEREAS, the entitlement of our soldiers to high quality medical and rehabilitative care notwithstanding, the establishment of a Veterans Nursing Home facility to serve the Greater Memphis area will have impressive economic benefits for the area. Approximately 230 professional jobs along with an estimated \$10 million economic gain for the area is projected to result from the development of such a facility in this locale; and

WHEREAS, as recently as December 2010, the State's ability to operate nursing homes for veterans and provide care that exceeds the industry standards has been affirmed through reviews by the U. S. Department of Justice, the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Tennessee Department of Health; and

WHEREAS, our veterans are deserving of the best care the State can provide; the State is capable of properly administering the care; and there is a present and growing need for such care in the southwestern-most part of the State; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby express our support for the establishment of a Tennessee State Veterans Nursing Home to specifically serve the veteran population in and around Shelby, Tipton, and Fayette counties in West Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.